

### SOVIET POLICY IN AZERBAIJAN.

among the Kurds has apparently produced no lasting result and has been left rather to the direct action of Soviet agents, the Azerbaijanis have proved more susceptible in view of their pronounced regional aspirations. As we shall see later, it was in Azerbaijan that the greatest effort of the Tudeh was focused in 1943. In this connection it is worth while mentioning that the Tudeh deputies in the Majlis invariably posed as defenders of the northern provinces anxious to eliminate government inefficiency and corruption. Acting in this manner, they endeavored to monopolize northern representation although they constituted only a minority of the deputies from the Soviet zone.

Perhaps the most ambitious of all Tudeh moves before the Azerbaijan crisis in 1945 was the attempt to extend its influence in the south. In 1944 increased agitation of the party led to bloody disturbances in Isfahan and occupation of the factories by the workers. This, in turn, led to the suppression of the Tudeh in Isfahan during the spring of 1945.

In all circumstances the Tudeh unswervingly maintained its loyalty to the Soviet cause. On no point did the party press editorials differ from the Soviet point of view. As long as Soviet policy manifested its restraint in criticizing the West (1941-1943), the Tudeh press was also cautious in its tone. "When disagreements between the Soviets and the West became more conspicuous, the Tudeh increased its anti-Western hostility and began to indulge in more open attacks against the Anglo-Saxon powers. At the same time the Tudeh steadfastly denied that any contact existed between it and the Soviet authorities. For example, *Rahbar* asserted on May 7, 1944:

There seems to be an established opinion that the  
 Tudeh Party is an  
 organ of Soviet Communists. . . . Why conduct a one-sided  
 policy? Why  
 think that every Communist wants only the incorporation  
 of other coun-  
 tries into the Soviet Union? The Tudeh works for the  
 Iranian nation, for  
 the maintenance of our own constitution, for the defense  
 of Iran's inde-  
 pendence, for the freedom of Iranian citizens. The Tudeh  
 wants to intro-  
 duce in Iran democratic principles such as they are in  
 America. If our Party  
 publishes pro-Soviet articles, it is because the Soviets fight  
 well against the  
 fascists. We are sure that the Soviet government neither  
 intends to introduce  
 Bolshevik government in Iran nor to occupy Iran.

[2333]